

What is claimed is:

1. An image processing apparatus having an image selecting function, comprising:

an evaluation device that takes in a plurality of sets 5 of image data of a subject obtained through image-capturing and performs acceptability evaluation on each of said plurality of sets of image data; and

an acceptability selection device that selects image data ranked high in the acceptability evaluation among the 10 plurality of sets of image data having undergone the acceptability evaluation performed at said evaluation device.

2. An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of sets of image data are obtained 15 through continuous image-capturing at predetermined time intervals.

3. An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said acceptability selection device records the 20 selected image data into a recording medium.

4. An image processing apparatus having an image selecting function, comprising:

an evaluation device that takes in a plurality of sets 25 of image data obtained through continuous image-capturing and

performs acceptability evaluation on each of the plurality of sets of image data within an evaluation area set to occupy a portion of an image plane; and

an acceptability selection device that selects image  
5 data ranked high in the acceptability evaluation among the plurality of sets of image data having undergone the acceptability evaluation performed at said evaluation device and records the image data into a recording medium.

10 5. An image processing apparatus according to claim 4,  
wherein:

said evaluation device sets evaluation weighting toward a periphery of the evaluation area lower than an evaluation weighting at a central portion of the evaluation area.

15 6. An image processing apparatus according to claim 4,  
wherein:

a plurality of evaluation areas are set at a plurality of locations within the image plane; and

20 said evaluation device performs integrated evaluation of acceptability of image data based upon individual evaluations performed in the evaluation areas.

25 7. An image processing apparatus according to claim 4,  
further comprising:

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an area setting device that selects an evaluation area or selects and changes weighting of evaluation areas.

8. An image processing apparatus according to claim 7,  
5 wherein:

said area setting device selects an evaluation area by excluding light areas and dark areas in the image plane or by setting evaluation weighting for light areas and dark areas at a relatively low level.

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9. An image processing apparatus according to claim 7,  
wherein:

said area setting device selects an evaluation area by selecting an area that is in a focus-verified state in the image  
15 plane or by setting evaluation weighting for the area that is in a focus-verified state at a relatively high level.

10. An image processing apparatus according to claim 7,  
further comprising:

20 an image-capturing device that continuously captures images of a subject, wherein:

said area setting device is also utilized to select a photometric area for said image-capturing device, and in correspondence to either the photometric area or the  
25 evaluation area that is determined first, the other area is

determined.

11. An image processing apparatus according to claim 7,  
further comprising:

5 an image-capturing device that continuously captures  
images of a subject, wherein:

said area setting device is also utilized to select a  
focal point detection area for said image-capturing device,  
and in correspondence to either the focal point detection area  
10 or the evaluation area that is determined first, the other area  
is determined.

12. An image processing apparatus according to claim 10,  
further comprising:

15 a lock device that fixes exposure adjustment in response  
to an external operation, wherein:

said area setting device clears or re-sets the evaluation  
area when said lock device has fixed the exposure adjustment.

20 13. An image processing apparatus according to claim 11,  
further comprising:

a lock device that fixes focal adjustment in response  
to an external operation, wherein:

said area setting device clears or re-sets the evaluation  
25 area when said lock device has fixed the focal adjustment.

14. An image processing apparatus having an image selecting function, comprising:

an image-capturing device that continuously captures  
5 images of a subject;

an evaluation device that takes in a plurality of sets of image data obtained at said image-capturing device through continuous image-capturing and performs acceptability evaluation on each of the plurality of sets of image data;

10 an acceptability selection device that selects image data ranked high in the acceptability evaluation among the plurality of sets of image data having undergone the acceptability evaluation performed at said evaluation device and records the image data into a recording medium; and

15 a frame number changing device that changes a number of frames over which continuous image-capturing is performed at said image-capturing device.

15. An image processing apparatus according to claim 14.  
20 wherein:

said frame number changing device stops a continuous image-capturing operation performed by said image-capturing device when an evaluation made by said evaluation device indicates one of a value greater than a specific upper limit  
25 value, a value less than a specific lower limit value and a

relative maximum value.

16. An image processing apparatus according to claim 14,  
further comprising:

5       a framing detection device that detects a framing change  
at said image-capturing device, wherein:  
  
          said frame number changing device stops a continuous  
image-capturing operation by said image-capturing device when  
the framing change is detected by said framing detection  
10      device.

17. An image processing apparatus according to claim 14,  
wherein:

15      said frame number changing device allows a continuous  
image-capturing operation to be resumed at said image-  
capturing device when none of evaluations made by said  
evaluation device reach a specific threshold value.

18. An image processing apparatus having an evaluation  
20      display function, comprising:

          an evaluation device that takes in a plurality of sets  
of image data obtained through continuous image-capturing and  
performs acceptability evaluation on each of the plurality of  
sets of image data;

25      a display device that displays image data together with

evaluations of the image data made by said evaluation device;

5           a selection operation device that accepts an external image selection operation that is performed to select one set of image data among the image data brought up on said display device; and

              a selection recording device that records the image data selected via said selection operation device into a recording medium.

10     19. An image processing apparatus having an evaluation display function, comprising:

15     an evaluation device that takes in a plurality of sets of image data obtained through continuous image-capturing and performs acceptability evaluation on each of the plurality of sets of image data;

              a display device that displays a plurality of sets of image data in a order of evaluation rankings in the acceptability evaluation made by said evaluation device;

20     a selection operation device that accepts an external image selection operation that is performed to select one set of image data among the image data brought up on said display device; and

25     a selection recording device that records the image data selected via said selection operation device into a recording medium.

20. An image processing apparatus having an evaluation display function, comprising:

an evaluation device that performs acceptability evaluation on image data obtained through image-capturing; and  
5 a display device that displays an image based upon the image data together with the evaluation made by said evaluation device.

10 21. An image processing apparatus according to claim 20, wherein:

said display device displays a highest evaluation made by said evaluation device together with a most recent evaluation made by said evaluation device.

15 22. An image processing apparatus having an image selecting function, comprising:

a compression device that engages in compression processing on image data;

20 an evaluation device that controls said compression device to compresses a plurality of sets of image data obtained through continuous image-capturing by using a compression parameter for acceptability evaluation and performs acceptability evaluation on each set of image data based upon 25 a resulting post-compression code volume; and

~~an acceptability selection device that selects image~~

data ranked high in the acceptability evaluation among the plurality of sets of image data having undergone the acceptability evaluation at said acceptability evaluation device and records the selected image data into a recording medium in a state in which the selected image data are compressed via said compression device to achieve a target post-compression code volume for image recording.

10 23. An image processing apparatus according to claim 22.  
wherein:

said acceptability selection device makes a decision as to whether or not a post-compression code volume of the image data that have been selected, achieved in the acceptability evaluation is within an allowable range for a target post-compression code volume for image recording, and records compressed data resulting from the acceptability evaluation if the post-compression code volume is within the allowable range, but re-compresses the image data that have been selected to achieve the target post-compression volume for image recording and records the re-compressed image data if the post-compression code volume is not within the allowable range.

25 24. An image processing apparatus according to claim 22.

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wherein.

said compression device determines a compression parameter to be used for re-compression to achieve the target post-compression volume for image recording based upon results of the compression processing performed during the acceptability evaluation.

25. An image processing apparatus comprising:
- an image-capturing device that captures an image of a subject;
- a recording device that records image data obtained through image-capturing performed by said image-capturing device;
- a photographic evaluation device that evaluates acceptability of a photographing state in which the image data have been obtained through image-capturing performed by said image-capturing device;
- a mode setting device that, in response to an external operation, sets or clears (1) an acceptability selection mode in which image data with a high evaluation from said photographic evaluation device among image data obtained through continuous image-capturing performed by said image-capturing device are selectively recorded and (2) a continuous shooting mode in which image data corresponding to a plurality of frames obtained through continuous image-

capturing performed by said image-capturing device are all recorded, to determine a photographing sequence that corresponds to a current mode setting; and

a photographic control device that implements control  
5 on said image-capturing device and said recording device in conformance to the photographing sequence determined by said mode setting device and executes photographing, wherein:

said mode setting device implements control of setting  
to ensure that even if an instruction is issued through an  
10 external operation for a setting whereby the acceptability selection mode and the continuous shooting mode overlap each other the acceptability selection mode and the continuous shooting mode do not overlap in setting.

15 26. An image processing apparatus according to claim 25,  
wherein:

said mode setting device implements control to ensure  
that if an external operation is performed to set either the  
continuous shooting mode or the acceptability selection mode  
20 while the other mode is set, the external operation is not accepted.

27. An image processing apparatus according to claim 25,  
wherein:

25 said mode setting device implements control to ensure

that if the continuous shooting mode and the acceptability selection mode are set overlapping each other, either mode that has been set earlier is automatically cleared.

- 5 28. An image processing apparatus according to claim 27, wherein:

said mode setting device reverts to the mode set earlier and automatically cleared, if an external operation clears overlapping of mode settings.

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29. An image processing apparatus comprising:

an image-capturing device that captures an image of a subject;

15 a recording device that records image data obtained through image-capturing performed by said image-capturing device;

20 a photographic evaluation device that evaluates acceptability of a photographing state in which the image data have been obtained through image-capturing performed by said image-capturing device;

25 a mode setting device that, in response to an external operation, sets or clears (1) an acceptability selection mode in which image data with a high evaluation from said photographic evaluation device among image data obtained through continuous image-capturing performed by said

image-capturing device are selectively recorded and (2) a continuous shooting mode in which image data corresponding to a plurality of frames obtained through continuous image-capturing performed by said image-capturing device are all recorded, to determine a photographing sequence that corresponds to a current mode setting; and

5        a photographic control device that implements control on said image-capturing device and said recording device in conformance to the photographing sequence determined by said mode setting device and executes photographing, wherein:

10      said photographic control device executes a photographing sequence selected in correspondence to a mode given higher priority in conformance to a predetermined priority order even if the acceptability selection mode and 15     the continuous shooting mode are set overlapping each other through an external operation.

30. An image processing apparatus comprising:

an image-capturing device that captures an image of a 20    subject;

a recording device that records image data obtained through image-capturing performed by said image-capturing device;

25      a photographic evaluation device that evaluates acceptability of a photographing state in which the image data

have been obtained through image-capturing performed by said image-capturing device;

a mode setting device that, in response to an external operation, sets or clears (1) an acceptability selection mode  
5 in which image data with a high evaluation from said photographic evaluation device among image data obtained through continuous image-capturing performed by said image-capturing device are selectively recorded and (2) a light emission mode in which light-emission is performed  
10 automatically or unconditionally by controlling an external or internal flash unit at image-capturing by said image-capturing device, to determine a photographing sequence that corresponds to a current mode setting; and

a photographic control device that implements control  
15 on said image-capturing device and said recording device in conformance to the photographing sequence determined by said mode setting device and executes photographing, wherein:

said mode setting device implements control of setting  
to ensure that even if an instruction is issued through an  
20 external operation for a setting whereby the acceptability selection mode and the light emission mode overlap each other the acceptability selection mode and the continuous shooting mode do not overlap in setting.

25 31. An image processing apparatus according to claim 30,

wherein:

    said mode setting device implements control to ensure  
    that if an external operation is performed to set either the  
    light emission mode or the acceptability selection mode while  
5     the other mode is set, the external operation is not accepted.

32. An image processing apparatus according to claim 30,  
wherein:

    said mode setting device implements control to ensure  
10    that if the light emission mode and the acceptability selection  
    mode are set overlapping each other, either mode that has been  
    set earlier is automatically cleared.

33. An image processing apparatus according to claim 32,  
15    wherein:

    said mode setting device reverts to the mode set earlier  
    and automatically cleared, if an external operation clears  
    overlapping of mode settings.

20    34. An image processing apparatus comprising:

    an image-capturing device that captures an image of a  
    subject;

    a recording device that records image data obtained  
    through image-capturing performed by said image-capturing  
25    device;

a photographic evaluation device that evaluates acceptability of a photographing state in which the image data have been obtained through image-capturing performed by said image-capturing device;

- 5        a mode setting device that, in response to an external operation, sets or clears (1) an acceptability selection mode in which image data with a high evaluation from said photographic evaluation device among image data obtained through continuous image-capturing performed by said image-capturing device are selectively recorded and (2) a light emission mode in which light emission is performed automatically or unconditionally by controlling an external or internal flash unit at image-capturing by said image-capturing device, to determine a photographing sequence that
- 10      corresponds to a current mode setting; and
- 15

      a photographic control device that implements control on said image-capturing device and said recording device in conformance to the photographing sequence determined by said mode setting device and executes photographing, wherein:

- 20      said photographic control device executes a photographing sequence selected in correspondence to a mode given higher priority in conformance to a predetermined priority order even if the acceptability selection mode and the light emission mode are set overlapping each other through
- 25      an external operation.

35. A recording medium having a control program to be utilized at an image processing apparatus having an image selecting function recorded therein, said control program comprising:

an instruction for taking in a plurality of sets of image data of a subject obtained through image-capturing;

an instruction for performing acceptability evaluation on each of the plurality of sets of image data; and

10 an instruction for selecting image data ranked high in the acceptability evaluation among the image data having undergone the acceptability evaluation.

36. A data signal embodied in a carrier wave comprising a control program for use by an image processing apparatus having an image selecting function, said control program comprising:

an instruction for taking in a plurality of sets of image data of a subject obtained through image-capturing;

an instruction for performing acceptability evaluation 20 on each of the plurality of sets of image data; and

an instruction for selecting image data ranked high in the acceptability evaluation among the image data having undergone the acceptability evaluation.